



The County Observer

Roanoke County Police Department Crime Prevention Newsletter

Reducing Gun Crime

THE INCIDENCE OF GUN VIOLENCE REMAINS HIGH. DESPITE AN OVERALL DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF GUN HOMICIDES DURING THE LAST 15 YEARS, THE INCIDENCE OF GUN VIOLENCE STILL REMAINS INTOLERABLY HIGH.

In 1999, guns were involved in over one-third of one million violent crimes; 10,128 people were murdered with guns; and 41 of the 42 law enforcement officers killed in the United States died from gunshot wounds. Homicides are most often committed with guns, especially handguns. In 1999, 51 percent of homicides were committed with handguns and 14 percent with other guns.

Enforcement helps reduce gun violence in several ways:

- It reinforces the message that the community will not tolerate gun violence.
- It removes serious violent offenders from the streets and out of our neighborhoods.
- Under Federal law, felons, drug dealers, and other specified individuals can face 10 to 15 years in prison for illegally possessing a gun or ammunition.
- It increases the risk faced by potential offenders.

Prevention also plays a key role in gun violence reduction:

- It necessitates a proactive approach to gun crime.
- It promotes cohesion within communities. Studies show that communities that engage in communication and cooperation are safer, regardless of socio-economic factors.
- Through community outreach and cooperation, it sends a message of no tolerance from the community to potential offenders.
- It can result in a dramatic decrease in the number of homicides, as evidenced in the city of Boston; after initiating their juvenile gun crime program, juvenile homicides fell from 152 in 1990 to just 43 in 1997.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN): America's Network Against Gun Violence is a new federal initiative to reduce gun violence. The nation's U.S. Attorneys are taking the lead in bringing PSN to the states and communities they serve. They will spearhead enforcement task forces, work with local officials to identify the most effective laws to use against gun-carrying criminals, and help focus community attention and energy on preventing and reducing gun

violence. The project provides funds for state and local governments to employ additional prosecutors focused on enforcing gun laws; target gun traffickers, armed violent offenders, and those prohibited from buying guns; and improve record keeping.

Editor's Note: From the National Crime Prevention Council-Monthly Action Kit.

BURGLARIES

On November 1, 2005, the Roanoke County Police Department changed over to a new computer system. We are having a difficult time finding an effective way to get data on calls for service after that date. Hopefully we will have them for you again shortly after the first of the year. The following burglaries were reported to the Roanoke County Police Department during the months of September and October.

District one had one residential burglary in the 5500 block of Wipledale Avenue, one residential burglary in the 2800 block of Embassy Drive, seven business burglaries in the 7600 block of Williamson Road, one business burglary in the 5500 block of Green Ridge Road, one business burglary in the 5900 block of Cove Road, one business burglary in the 2900 block of Peters Creek Road, and one business burglary in the 6500 block of Thirlane Road.

District two had one residential burglary in the 4900 block of Glade Creek Road, one residential burglary in the 4800 block of Sidetrack Road, one residential burglary in the 7000 block of Greenway Drive, one residential burglary in the 5000 block of Labradore Drive, one residential burglary in the 6700 block of Greenway Drive, one business burglary in the 4900 block of Plantation Road, one business burglary in the 5400 block of Williamson Road, and one business burglary in the 6400 block of Williamson Road.

District three had one residential burglary in the 3900 block of Pitzer Road, one residential burglary in the 7900 block of Dunahoo Drive, one residential burglary in the 1000 block of Howell Drive, one residential burglary in the 500 block of Stacie Drive, one residential burglary in the 200 block of Laurel Hill Drive, one residential burglary in the 3100 block of Huffman Lane, one residential burglary in the 600 block of McGeorge Drive, one residential burglary in the 5500 block of Yellow Mountain Road, one residential burglary in the 5100 block of Old Virginia Springs, and one residential burglary in the 2300 block of Highland Road.

District four had one residential burglary in the 5100 block of Overland Drive, one residential burglary in the 7300 block of Maple Court, one residential burglary in the 5600 block of Southern Pines Drive, one business burglary in the 4300 block of Electric Road, and one business burglary in the 4500 block of Starkey Road.

District five had one residential burglary in the 3500 block of Bunker Hill Drive, one residential burglary in the 3800 block of Sunhaven Court, one residential

burglary in the 3600 block of Timberline Trail, one business burglary in the 5400 block of Bernard Drive, and one business burglary in the 3500 block of Brambleton Avenue.

District six had one residential burglary in the 5800 block of Coleman Road, one residential burglary in the 4400 block of Brentwood Court, one residential burglary in the 5300 block of Luwana Drive, one residential burglary in the 10500 block of Slings Gap Road, one residential burglary in the 5600 block of Warwood Drive, one residential burglary in the 7100 block of Cotton Hill Road, one business burglary in the 5000 block of Carriage Drive, one business burglary in the 4800 block of Brambleton Avenue, one business burglary in the 6900 block of Bent Mountain Road, and one business burglary in the 5000 block of Titan Trail.

District seven had one residential burglary in the 1800 block of High Gate Lane, one residential burglary in the 1600 block of Millwood Drive, one residential burglary in the 6400 block of Dry Hollow Road, and one residential burglary in the 4800 block of Warrior Drive.

District eight had one residential burglary in the 4000 block of Bluebird Lane, one residential burglary in the 1700 block of Rubley Lane, one residential burglary in the 1700 block of Carleton Drive, one residential burglary in the 2100 block of Loch Haven Drive, one residential burglary in the 2000 block of Loch Haven Drive, and one business burglary in the 3200 block of Catawba Valley Drive.

FIREARM SAFETY

Whether or not you have children, chances are that you will have an inquisitive child in your home at one time or another, especially during the holiday season. Please remember that gun safety at home is extremely important.

According to the National Crime Prevention Counsel, nearly two-thirds of firearm-owning parents with school age children believe they keep their firearm safely away from their children. However, one study found that when a gun was in the home, 75 to 80 percent of first and second graders knew exactly where it was kept.

Remember, few children under age eight can reliably distinguish between real and toy guns or fully understand the consequences of their actions. Yet children as young as age three are strong enough to pull the trigger of many handguns. Children see firearms frequently on television and in the movies and younger kids may not be able to distinguish between "real" and "pretend." Don't assume your child knows that actors on television use play guns and pretend to be wounded and die.

Talk to them about the real – life damage a firearm can do to the human body. Children are most curious about something they think is "forbidden" or mysterious. Use age appropriate methods to take the mystery out of your gun.

CAUTION WITH CANDLES

Around the holidays many people will be decorating with candles. Roanoke County Fire & Rescue chose "Use candles with care" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15.

They state that candles are a growing cause of home fires and home fire deaths. Remember that a candle has open flame which means that it can easily ignite any combustible material nearby. They also emphasize that because candle fires spread so quickly, it is essential that you have working smoke alarms in your residence and a home fire escape plan ready to go.

Follow these tips recommended by the Fire Prevention Office to help you use candles safely:

- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish all candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Keep candles at least one foot away from anything that can burn including curtains, blinds, wallpaper, clothing or any other material that can catch fire.
- Don't place lit candles in windows or near doorways where drafts could bring combustibles in contact with the flame.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy that won't tip over.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and loose clothing away from the flame.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch.
- Store matches and lighters up high and out of children's sight and reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.

SMART, SAFE, AND SOBER

This holiday season there will be many parties and activities for you to go out and enjoy. While having fun please keep a few things in mind:

- Alcohol-related highway crashes are the leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults.
- Take a stand against impaired driving: Always drive sober. If you drink, plan ahead and designate a non-drinking driver.
- Never serve alcoholic beverages to anyone under 21. **It's against the law!!!**
- Report suspected impaired drivers to local police by dialing 9-1-1 or #77 from your cell phone.
- Buckle up! It's your best defense against an impaired driver.
- Support DWI law enforcement efforts and stronger DWI laws.

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

This is an exciting time of year when people begin shopping for the holidays. This excitement brings many more distractions. Make a conscious effort to be alert to your surroundings at all times. Many people are chosen as victims because of their actions and behaviors.

Always park your vehicle in areas that have good lighting. Park as close to the business as you can. Park in front of stores if possible and not in the rear where people seldom go. Remember that there

is safety in numbers. Try to walk to your vehicle as others are walking out.

Never carry large amounts of cash on you, pay for purchases with a check or credit card. Carry a purse close to your body and not dangling off of your arm. Put a wallet in an inside coat pocket or front pants pocket.

Finally, do not try to carry all of your packages at one time. Keep one arm free to have your key ready as you approach your car. That one free arm can also be used to defend you from an attack.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency	911
Criminal Investigation	561-8063
Vice-Narcotics	561-8097
Crime Prevention	561-8062
rcrosier@roanokecountyva.gov	
Rape Aggression Defense	561-8092
RAD@roanokecountyva.gov	
AEP (Street Lights, Outages):	1-800-956-4237

Crime Line	344-8500
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WEBSITES

Roanoke County Police
www.RoanokeCountyVA.gov/Police

Commonwealth of Virginia
 Terrorism Alert System
www.commonwealthpreparedness.virginia.gov/

National Sheriff's Association
 Neighborhood Watch Program
www.usaonwatch.org

RVTV 3 – Roanoke Valley
 Television
www.rvtv.org